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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON SADDAM HUSSEIN'S TRIAL

Editorial Commentary

-- "Purposeful justice"

Centrist, elite English daily Jordan Times (06/20) editorializes:
"In line with this newspaper's long-standing liberal tradition and consistent with its vocal defense of human rights, we are against Saddam being hanged. First, we are against the death penalty in principle, for both practical and moral reasons. From a practical point of view, it has been proven time and again that capital punishment does not serve as a deterrent for people to stop committing heinous crimes.... Morally, we believe that no human being, entity or institution should be entitled to dispose of the most sacred thing on earth: human life. In the specific case of Saddam, there are both practical and moral reasons not to execute him.... Even some ordinary Iraqis are arguing that executing Saddam could be counterproductive: it could make him a martyr in the eyes of his fanatic die-hard supporters within the insurgency, thus strengthening some militant fringes. Most importantly, however, we should ask our selves whether hanging Saddam would fulfill the very raison d'etre of this trial.... Ordinary Iraqis need to see him tried and convicted under their law, by their judges and within their own courts, to feel that they can finally make justice for themselves. But for all this to happen, the tribunal trying Saddam and the whole legal proceeding need enjoy utmost legitimacy in the eyes of all Iraqis. And this is still questionable for too many, and the trial has too often been branded as an empty, mediatic show for it to serve as a unifying, cathartic exercise for the whole nation."
RUBINSTEIN